



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/839,141	04/23/2001	Shuichi Shiitani	1359.1044	1624

21171 7590 10/12/2004
STAAS & HALSEY LLP
SUITE 700
1201 NEW YORK AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

EXAMINER

GART, MATTHEW S

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3625

DATE MAILED: 10/12/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/839,141

Applicant(s)

SHIITANI ET AL.

Examiner

Matthew s Gart

Art Unit

3625



-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 8/18/2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 11-16 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 and 17-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 April 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election without traverse of Group 1 (claims 1-10 and 17-20) in the Attorney's Response to Restriction Requirement dated May 26, 2004 is acknowledged. Claims 11-16 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Claims 1-10 and 17-20 are pending in the instant application.

Priority

Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 19-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Referring to claims 19-20. Claims to computer-related inventions that are clearly nonstatutory fall into the same general categories as nonstatutory claims in other arts, namely natural phenomena such as magnetism, and abstract ideas or laws of nature which constitute "descriptive material." Abstract ideas, *Warmerdam*, 33 F.3d at 1360, 31 USPQ2d at 1759, or the mere manipulation of abstract ideas, *Schrader*, 22 F.3d at

Art Unit: 3625

292-93, 30 USPQ2d at 1457-58, are not patentable. Descriptive material can be characterized as either "functional descriptive material" or "nonfunctional descriptive material." In this context, "functional descriptive material" consists of data structures and computer programs which impart functionality when employed as a computer component. "Nonfunctional descriptive material" includes but is not limited to music, literary works and a compilation or mere arrangement of data. Both types of "descriptive material" are nonstatutory when claimed as descriptive material per se (i.e. a program). When functional descriptive material is recorded on some computer-readable medium it becomes structurally and functionally interrelated to the medium and will be statutory in most cases since use of technology permits the function of the descriptive material to be realized. Compare *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 1583-84, 32 USPQ2d 1031, 1035 (Fed. Cir. 1994).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-10 and 17-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Maes U.S. Patent Application Publication US2002/0002502.

Referring to claim 1. Maes discloses an online shopping method, comprising:

- Previously generating/preparing article data in which features of an article and a data sending rank are related to each article picture as additional information (Maes: paragraph 0048 through paragraph 0050);
- Upon receiving an article search by a user, generating article picture arrangement data in which article pictures similar to each other in the features are disposed at close positions, as search results of the article data (Maes: paragraph 0051 through paragraph 0052 and Figure 5);
- Sending the article picture arrangement data to a user terminal so that each article picture data is successively sent in accordance with the data sending rank (Maes: paragraph 0051 through paragraph 0052); and
- At the user terminal, displaying each article picture data at each arrangement position on a screen of search results in a receiving order, thereby displaying an

Art Unit: 3625

article picture with a higher data sending rank earlier at the arrangement position (Maes: paragraph 0054 through paragraph 0055).

Referring to claim 2. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein the features of the article are any one selected from the group consisting of features of an article picture of the article, a keyword representing the features of the article, and article classification information regarding classification of the article in accordance with the features thereof, or a combination thereof (Maes: paragraph 0048 through paragraph 0052).

Referring to claim 3. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein the data sending rank is determined by an article provider (Maes: paragraphs 0050).

Referring to claim 4. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein a service user previously selects items to be considered in purchasing an article and notifies a service provider of the selection, and the service provider determines the data sending rank in accordance with the notified items (Maes: paragraph 0054).

Referring to claim 5. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein a service provider previously analyzes items considered by a service user based on a past search history and a past purchase history of the service user, and the service provider determines the data sending rank in accordance with the analyzed items (Maes: paragraph 0097).

Referring to claim 6. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein a screen of article search results is presented to an article provider, and the article provider specifies a picture of an article which the article provider provides on the

Art Unit: 3625

presented screen of article search results, thereby making it possible to access selling information of the article (Maes: Figure 3 through Figure 6).

Referring to claim 7. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein the data sending rank is determined by an article provider ((Maes: paragraph 0048 through paragraph 0052).

Referring to claim 8. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein a service user previously selects items to be considered in purchasing an article and notifies a service provider of the selection, and the service provider determines the data sending rank in accordance with the notified items (Maes: paragraph 0054 through paragraph 0055).

Referring to claim 9. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein a service provider previously analyzes items considered by a service user based on a past search history and a past purchase history of the service user, and the service provider determines the data sending rank in accordance with the analyzed items (Maes: paragraph 0097).

Referring to claim 10. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein a screen of article search results is presented to an article provider, and the article provider specifies a picture of an article which the article provider provides on the presented screen of article search results, thereby making it possible to access selling information of the article (Maes: Figure 3 through Figure 6).

Referring to claims 17-20. Claims 17-20 are rejected under the same rationale as set forth above in claims 1-10.

Art Unit: 3625

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-10 and 17-20 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Matthew S Gart whose telephone number is 703-305-5355. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30AM to 5:00PM m-f.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wynn Coggins can be reached on 703-308-1344. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



MSG
Patent Examiner
October 4, 2004